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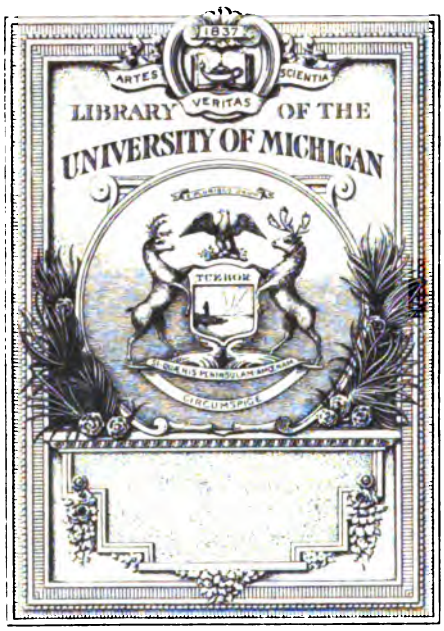
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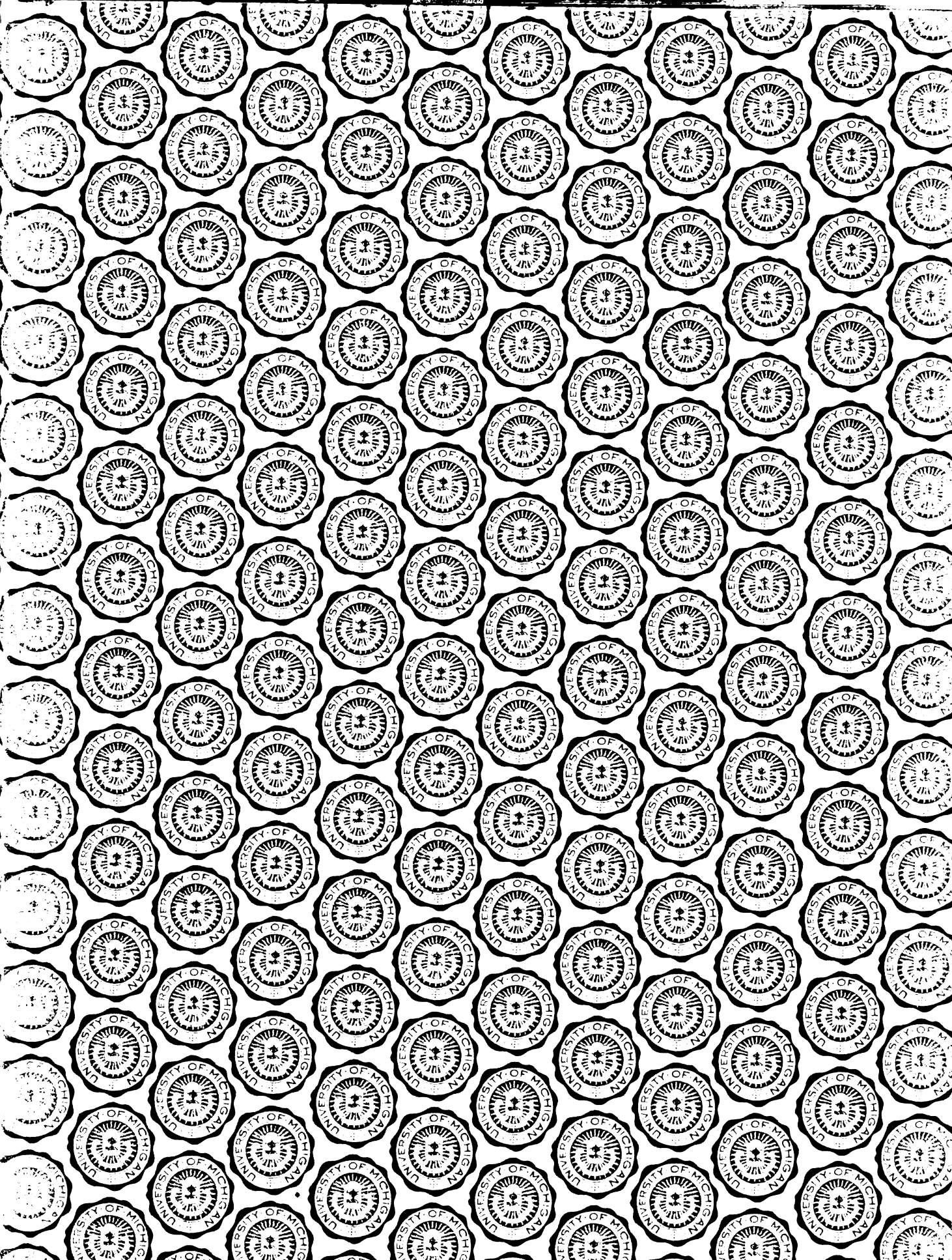
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POLLIO:

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AN

ELEGIAC ODE.

WRITTEN IN THE WOOD NEAR R—— CASTLE,

1762.

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English
Poetry
4-22-27
1461

ADVERTISEMENT.

IT has been often said that Fiction is the most proper Field for Poetry. If it is always so, the Writer of this little Piece acknowledges it is a circumstance against him. The following Ode was first suggested, and the Ideas contained in it raised, on revisiting the Ruins and Woods that had been the Scene of his early Amusements with a deserving Brother, who died in his Twenty-first Year.

POLLIO:

AN

ODE.

I.

THE peaceful Evening breathes her balmy ſtore,
The playful School-boys wanton o'er the Green;
Where ſpreading Poplars ſhade the Cottage Door,
The Villagers in ruſtic joy convene.

II.

Amid the ſecret Windings of the Wood,
With ſolemn Meditation let me ſtray;
This is the Hour, when, to the Wiſe and Good,
The heavenly Maid repays the Toils of Day.

III.

The River murmurs, and the breathing Gale
Whiſpers the gently waving Boughs among,
The Star of Evening glimmers o'er the Dale,
And leads the ſilent Hoſt of Heaven along.

IV.

How bright, emerging o'er yon broom-clad Height,
The ſilver Empreſs of the Night appears!
Yon limpid Pool reflects a ſtream of Light,
And faintly in its breaſt the Woodland bears.

V.

The Waters tumbling o'er their rocky Bed,
Solemn and conſtant, from yon Dell reſound;
The lonely Hearths blaze o'er the diſtant Glade;
The Bat, low-wheeling, ſkims the duſky Ground.

VI.

Auguſt and hoary, o'er the ſloping Dale,
The Gothic Abbey rears its ſculptur'd Towers;
Dull through the Roofs reſounds the whiſtling Gale;
Dark Solitude among the Pillars lowers.

VII.

Where yon old Trees bend o'er a Place of Graves,
And ſolemn ſhade a Chapel's ſad remains,
Where yon ſcath'd Poplar through the Window waves,
And, twining round, the hoary Arch ſuſtains;

VIII.

There, oft, at Dawn, as One forgot behind,
Who longs to follow, yet unknowing where,
Some hoary Shepherd, o'er his Staff reclin'd,
Pores on the Graves, and ſighs a broken Prayer.

IX.

High o'er the Pines, that with their dark'ning ſhade
Surround yon craggy Bank, the Caſtle rears
Its crumbling Turrets: ſtill its towery Head
A warlike mien, a ſullen grandeur wears.

X.

So, midſt the ſnow of Age, a boaſtful air
Still on the war-worn Veteran's Brow attends;
Still his big Bones his youthful Prime declare,
Though, trembling o'er the feeble Crutch, he bends.

XI.

Wild round the Gates the duſky Wall-flowers creep,
Where oft the Knights the beauteous Dames have led;
Gone is the Bower, the Grot a ruin'd heap,
Where Bays and Ivy o'er the fragments ſpread.

XII.

'Twas here our Sires exulting from the Fight,
Great in their bloody arms, march'd o'er the Lea,
Eying their reſcued Fields with proud delight;
Now loſt to them! and, ah how chang'd to me!

XIII.

This Bank, the River, and the fanning Breeze,
The dear Idea of my POLLIO bring;
So ſhone the Moon through theſe ſoft nodding Trees,
When here we wander'd in the Eves of Spring.

XIV.

When April's ſmiles the flowery Lawn adorn,
And modeſt Cowſlips deck the Streamlet's ſide,
When fragrant Orchards to the roſeate Morn
Unfold their Bloom, in Heaven's own Colours dy'd:

XV.

So fair a Bloſſom gentle POLLIO wore,
  Theſe were the Emblems of his healthful Mind;
To Him the letter'd Page diſplay'd its Lore,
  To Him bright Fancy all her Wealth reſign'd:

XVI.

Him, with her pureſt Flames, the Muſe endow'd,
  Flames never to th' illiberal Thought allied;
The ſacred Siſters led where Virtue glow'd
  In all her Charms; he ſaw, he felt, and died.

XVII.

Oh Partner of my Infant Griefs and Joys!
  Big with the Scenes now paſt my Heart o'erflows,
Bids each Endearment, fair as once, to riſe,
  And dwells luxurious on her melting Woes.

XVIII.

Oft with the riſing Sun when Life was new,
Along the Woodland have I roam'd with Thee;
Oft by the Moon have bruſh'd the Evening Dew,
When all was fearleſs Innocence and Glee.

XIX.

The ſainted Well where yon bleak Hill declines,
Has oft been conſcious of thoſe happy Hours;
But now the Hill, the River crown'd with Pines,
And ſainted Well have loſt their cheering Powers,

XX.

For Thou art gone —— My Guide, my Friend, oh where,
Where haſt thou fled, and left me here behind!
My tendereſt Wiſh, my Heart to Thee was bare,
Oh, now cut off each paſſage to thy Mind!

XXI.

How dreary is the Gulph, how dark, how void,
The trackleſs Shores that never were repaſt!
Dread Separation! on the Depth untry'd
Hope faulters, and the Soul recoils aghaſt.

XXII.

Wide round the ſpacious Heavens I caſt my eyes;
And ſhall theſe Stars glow with immortal fire,
Still ſhine the *lifeleſs* glories of the Skies,
And could thy bright, thy LIVING Soul expire?

XXIII.

Far be the thought —— the Pleaſures moſt ſublime,
The Glow of Friendſhip, and the virtuous Tear,
The tow'ring Wiſh that ſcorns the bounds of Time,
Chill'd in this Vale of Death, but languiſh here.

XXIV.

So plant the Vine on Norway's wintery Land,
The languid Stranger feebly buds, and dies:
Yet there's a Clime where Virtue ſhall expand
With godlike ſtrength, beneath her native Skies.

XXV.

The lonely Shepherd on the Mountain's ſide,
With patience waits the roſy opening Day;
The Mariner at Midnight's darkſome tide,
With chearful hope expects the Morning Ray.

XXVI.

Thus I, on Life's ſtorm-beaten Ocean toſt,
In mental viſion view the happy Shore,
Where POLLIO beckons to the peaceful Coaſt,
Where Fate and Death divide the Friends no more.

XXVII.

Oh that ſome kind, ſome pitying kindred Shade,
Who now, perhaps, frequents this ſolemn Grove,
Would tell the awful Secrets of the Dead,
And from my Eyes the mortal Film remove!

XXVIII.

Vain is the Wiſh —— yet ſurely not in vain
Man's Boſom glows with that celeſtial Fire,
Which ſcorns Earth's Luxuries, which ſmiles at Pain,
And wings his Spirit with ſublime Deſire.

XXIX.

To fan this Spark of Heaven, this Ray divine,
Still, oh my Soul! ſtill be thy dear Employ;
Still thus to wander through the Shades be thine,
And ſwell thy Breaſt with viſionary Joy.

XXX.

So to the dark-brow'd Wood, or ſacred Mount,
In antient days, the holy Seers retir'd,
And, led in viſion, drank at SILOE's Fount,
While riſing Extacies their Boſoms fir'd;

XXXI.

Reſtor'd Creation bright before them roſe,
The burning Deſarts ſmil'd as EDEN's Plains,
One friendly Shade the Wolf and Lambkin choſe,
The flowery Mountains ſung, "MESSIAH REIGNS!"

XXXII.

Though fainter Raptures my cold Breaſt inſpire,
Yet, let me oft frequent this ſolemn Scene,
Oft to the Abbey's ſhatter'd Walls retire,
What time the Moonſhine dimly gleams between.

XXXIII.

There, where the Croſs in hoary ruin nods,
And weeping Yews o'erſhade the letter'd Stones,
While midnight Silence wraps theſe drear Abodes,
And ſoothes me wand'ring o'er my kindred Bones,

XXXIV.

Let kindled Fancy view the glorious Morn,
When from the burſting Graves the Juſt ſhall riſe,
All Nature ſmiling, and, by Angels borne,
MESSIAH'S Croſs far blazing o'er the Skies.